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Summary of Contents for May, 1979

PAGES PAST	<i>Joseph Carroll</i>
MOKE OF SATAN	<i>L. J. O'Connor</i>
ITH, EXPERIENCE, TECHESIS	<i>Philip Trower</i>
OLOGY AND ORIGINAL N	<i>Archbishop Robert J. Dwyer</i>
STORATION	<i>The Editor</i>
E EVERLASTING AGONY	<i>Pam Croome</i>

THE IRISH CONNECTION

This has been broken by a prolonged and total postal strike in the Republic. This has made it impossible for Irish readers of *Christian Order* to send in their renewals of subscription for the past six weeks. In consequence the normal flow of cash into our office in London has been severely reduced. This has placed us in difficulties because we use this cash to pay our monthly bills incurred in the production of *Christian Order*.

Readers elsewhere whose subscriptions are now due would help us enormously if they would do all they can to renew their subscriptions right away. This applies not only to those whose subscriptions are due in this month of May, but to those in previous months who have received reminders and have not yet replied. They would do us an enormous kindness if, on reading these lines, they would send in their subscriptions immediately.

May I thank you in advance for the help that I know you will give at a difficult time.

Very gratefully yours,

Paul Crane, S.J.

P.S.—At the time of writing there is no sign that the strike will be settled; and, even when it is settled, the return to normality will be a slow business.

Cum Permissu Superiorum

Contents

Page

258 THE CRUELTY MUST STOP
The Editor

260 IN AGES PAST *Joseph Carroll*

273 ECOLOGY AND ORIGINAL
SIN *Archbishop Robert J. Dwyer*

277 ASPECTS OF FREEDOM
Henry Edwards

286 UNA VOCE: RESOLUTIONS
General Assembly

287 RESTORATION *The Editor*

300 SMOKE OF SATAN
L. J. O'Connor

305 THE EVERLASTING AGONY
Pam Croome

306 FAITH, EXPERIENCE,
CATECHESIS *Philip Trower*

317 BOOK REVIEWS *Paul Crane, S.J.*

If You Change Your Address :

Please let us know two or three weeks ahead if possible and please send us both new and old addresses. Thank you.

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Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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The Cruelty Must Stop

THE EDITOR

THE cruelty still goes on. I know no other word for it. I remain at a loss to understand why those guilty of it should be drawn so largely from the ranks of priests and religious within the Church. I refer to the overnight imposition on the Faithful, in the name of renewal and at the whim of a parish priest or his assistant, of devotional and liturgical practices which offend the deepest instincts of their parishioners and drive some of them close to despair—like the old lady who burst into tears when it was announced in church that, henceforth, the host might be received in the hand; or the layman, in another diocese to her's, who could no longer take what was going on, stood up in church to protest and was promptly dragged outside, still protesting, for his pains.

These are a couple of stories that have come to me very recently. I have received hundreds—by word of mouth and in writing and from those who are anything but “cranks”—during the past ten years. I have five large folders crammed with them. Yet, they are no more than the tip of the iceberg. Even so, as ugly a commentary as you could find on the application of supposed post-conciliar reform at the hands of the Church's priesthood and those bound by vows to a life of perfection. These are giving no cup of cold water to the least of Christ's little ones. They are throwing

it in His face. What has come over them? I do not know. I can only offer a suggestion.

They are, of course—the priests and religious who do these things—as self-enclosed within a clerical caste as their pre-conciliar predecessors, who gave the appearance of concern solely with the maintenance of an institutional apparatus, to the point where they were insensitive to the very real needs of those the institution was meant to serve. Their rule, in consequence, was authoritarian and by diktat, expecting and receiving unquestioning conformity. What has happened now, I believe, is that the leopard has changed not himself, but his spots. There is still enclosure within a clerical caste, which sees renewal in terms of concern not with people, but with structural change. A kind of bastard Marxism prevails. Change the structures and you will change the man; to Hell with those who resist—or vote with their feet. This is what many are now doing. In the Archdiocese of Westminster, from 1966 to 1977, average attendance at Sunday Mass dropped by 85,134—from 273,835 to 188,701. Of this the clerical reformers never appear to think in any other terms except that the voters are clearly wrong; therefore, not worth saving. Meanwhile, the show goes on. Enclosed within their own ideas, which are set within their caste, prisoners of their own ignorance, as fearful as their pre-conciliar predecessors of their position, they remain closed to lay suggestion; criticism from their congregations is ignored; seen, very often, as a crime in their eyes. Self-righteousness is the hall-mark of their self-contained lives. Authoritarianism, now as then, its necessary shield.

I write, obviously, not of all, but of the worst of the old and the new. There is, however, this difference. The worst of the new are now in charge. The worst of the old were fading away on the eve of the Council. The species might have gone forever, had the Council aftermath not given their would-be successors the chance of their lives. They seized it astutely and with both hands. They have not yet let go. They will do so only when forced by pressure from their brother priests and their congregations and, above all, the firm injunction of an ecclesiastical authority that is true to its task.

A good story, imaginatively told, can sometimes explain things far better than a theological tome. Below, we believe, you have a case in point.

In Ages Past

A FANTASY

JOSEPH CARROLL

IT has a dismal rainy night as I turned the key in the side door of our church after all had left, following the service to mark the closure of our joint congregational venture. It had been a sad service conducted jointly by a clergyman of each denomination and attended by no more than ten people, all of them over fifty.

As I drove my car back to my house on the old church grounds, I could not help but ponder over the past few years. What had gone wrong? Where had we fallen out of line?

The English Ecumenical Church

The six denominations coming jointly together twenty years previously had seemed such a fine project. It had been agreed after years of negotiation that each body would scrap all its existing liturgy and traditions and would form into one body with no ties to any other hierarchy. We became an English Ecumenical Church, our Head being the Archminister of Ramsgate.

It had seemed such a good idea at the time, even though we were disappointed that the Government were not interested in our lobbying to be acknowledged as the only official Church in England. They were not interested they said, quote, because we were a minority group, the bulk of the population was not interested in religion and therefore the Government did not feel obliged to recognise any sect as being official, especially since the Anglican Church was now disbanded and forms part of the Ecumenical Movement, unquote.

Dismayed but not disheartened, we continued our work of demolishing all the old churches of the six sects and building brand new ones in the Ecumenical rite, on straight lines with no adornment and no visible signs of religion. As agreed, each building was to be purely a meeting house of all creeds gradually emerging as one; a cut-off could not be made from the old to the new because it was felt that the remaining faithful had been through so much upheaval during the previous decades that a prolonged graduation of acceptance would be necessary. This was why there were six pastors to our particular parish. It was felt that once the new church was formed, the numbers attending our churches would increase surprisingly and that there would be more than enough work for all of us and that the number of regular churchgoers attending our services would ensure all of us a good standard of living.

How wrong we had been. We were all six of us by now, part time pastors only. Even I, educated and trained originally as a Roman Catholic priest at Ushaw College in Co. Durham (now, incidentally, in the hands of a large hotel chain with its majestic chapel commonly used as a dining-room in which are staged mediaeval banquets), had been obliged to take a position as part time clerk with a local storage company.

New seminaries had been built in various parts of the country in order to train men and women to become ministers in our new movement. We were sure at that time that these establishments would be full to overflowing, but one by one they had been obliged to close down.

Where Had We Gone Wrong?

Where had we gone wrong?

The project had seemed so adventurous and spectacular and was seen as the saviour of religion in this country, both spiritually and economically.

I let myself into the old presbytery which was my home. At one time it had been attached to the old R.C. church which had been demolished twenty years previously, long before I had come to the parish. The house, in perfect repair, had been left standing and kept to accommodate the R.C. minister of the newly formed parish. I had inherited

not only the house but also the furniture, a lot of it dating back to the beginning of the last century when the church had been built, and some of it, including a huge roll-top desk which was my pride and joy, must have been worth a small fortune.

I was saddened as I sat down at that same roll-top desk and proceeded to clear it of material collected during my term in the parish; thinking back to the start of all this when I as a young priest had been all for a clean break with Rome because it would not support wholeheartedly our proposals for a joint creed in England. It had seemed righteous at that time that we turn a church weakened by subversion and wracked by indecision, to begin again in a new vein with a religion of the people, by the people and for the people. We would show Rome where it had gone wrong and how we would regenerate religious fervour in England.

How wrong we had been. All our endeavours, all our efforts, all our different ideas and, yes, gimmicks if you like, to bring the people to our churches had failed miserably. Looking back now over those twenty odd years, I realised more than ever that something was missing and yet I did not know what. The projects we had tried and which had failed were almost uncountable. With tongue in cheek, I had to admit that we had driven people away.

Yet we were not the only clergy to break with Rome. Could we all have been wrong? The Dutch had been the first to form their own ecumenical movement, followed shortly by the Americans and then the rest of Europe. Granted, they had not been altogether successful, but we had been sure that we could learn from their mistakes; now, I hoped that someone would learn from ours.

What was to Become of Me?

And now, what was to become of me ?

I had been informed that, as the parish had been disbanded and there was no other position available for me, I was free to do as I wanted; but that my name would remain on the list of pastors and, therefore, I must notify the Central Committee of all future changes of address. I

could no longer remain in the church house as it was being rented to the Local Authority to house wayward children who were deeply involved in crime.

I cleared out the bills and letters, notes I had made, circulars, newspaper clippings, old diaries, calendars, etc. It was not a happy time, clearing away the debris of part of one's life which was coming to an end.

After an hour of such labour, I tired from sitting in the one position and leaned back in my chair to ease an aching spine. As I did so, I brought my knees up to rest on the edge of the desk and thence to tip the chair onto its back legs; a bad habit but something I had done for years. Whether I was more tired than I had thought or whether I just did not time it correctly, I do not know to this day, but I felt the chair going past the point of no return and threw my legs under the desk in order to save myself, which I did; and managed to right the chair and so renew my balance.

Two Reels of Film and a Roman Missal

The shock of my near fall was superceded by the greater shock of seeing a portion of the rear panel of the desk inside the roll top slide away to reveal a secret compartment. One of my feet must have released the mechanism necessary to open the panel. Inside were two reels of film and a Roman Missal. The binding of the book was perfection, the edge of each page was tinted with gold leaf and the page markers were vivid with colour. I knew that this was the kind of missal used by churchgoers in the old days prior to the banning of the Tridentine Mass. Inside the flyleaf was the inscription, "To my loving son Michael; Happy Christmas, 1957, Mother." Considering the age of the book, it was in perfect condition. I flicked through the pages and noted the ornate printing on the lead word of several of them. The whole book was printed side by side in Latin and in English.

I next examined the boxes containing the film but there was nothing to indicate either their age or content. The only way to find out what they contained was to run them. Quickly, I set up my projector and screen, removed the film from the box marked Reel 1, and loaded it onto the machine, switched out the lights and settled back to view.

A Church Interior

The words, "The Vigil", appeared on the screen and faded; then the picture lightened to reveal the interior of a church.

It was very high and, being without a ceiling, displayed all the supporting timbers of the roof structure. The main body of the church was inside the stone columns which supported the upper structure. A centre aisle led from back to front of the nave while two side-aisles containing smaller pews than those in the main body were housed in lower structures than the main church. The pews looked old and hard and had attached to them kneelers which looked even harder. We of course, had done away with our kneelers. Our congregation either stood or sat during our services.

No daylight was visible through the windows of the church.

The cameraman must have been in the choir or on some high structure at the rear of the church because he commanded a perfect view over almost the whole assembly.

The picture I was looking at closely resembled a photograph I had once seen of the old R.C. church which had once stood on these grounds, and yet there was something different about it. The difference was so obvious that I did not know how I had missed it in the first place; there was no sanctuary. The centre aisle ended abruptly at the point where the sanctuary should have begun but, instead, it ended at a huge purple curtain which ran from side to side of the sanctuary aperture and was about twenty feet high. It was unadorned, but the letters I.H.S., each about two feet high, were sewn onto the curtain at its centre. I now realised that the sanctuary was hidden behind the curtain.

A beautifully hand-carved oak pulpit dominated the left-hand side of the main body of the nave; it was a work of art. Immediately above the pulpit was a large cross draped in purple. Then, too, I realised that here and there about the church were quite a few purple-draped figures of various shapes and sizes. The only uncovered figure was a life-size Christ hanging from a magnificent cross, the upright member of which was the king post supporting the superstructure immediately before the front pews. Probably

the reason why it was uncovered was because it was too high for anyone to reach. Hanging from the base of the crucifix on twenty or more feet of chain was a huge silver sanctuary lamp ornately worked and with a red oil lamp at its centre. It was unlit.

I was puzzled.

Surely, in 1957, according to my training at least, the Catholic Church had not yet come into its transitional period of change, was still renowned for its pomp and pageantry, its silly little idiosyncrasies and outdated customs; and, yet, here was a church more drab and bare than ours could ever be.

There was no commentary with the film. The only sound effects were of a quiet congregation filing solemnly, without speaking, into the pews which were fast being filled. I had never seen so many people in a church at the one time. Sidesmen were conducting would-be worshippers to the few remaining seats in a courteous and quiet manner with no fuss, but a lot of diligence. Extra chairs were now being carried in by young men and placed in all vacant spaces so as to seat the oversized congregation.

The people, who appeared to be mostly working class, were smart of dress and appearance. Even the young people — and there were plenty of them in attendance — were neat and tidy. Whole families were sitting together and the congregation was made up of all age groups, but there were no small children present. The whole scene was puzzling to say the least.

The absence of noise was manifest.

No one showed the slightest inclination to talk. The few people who had to convey messages were doing so in muted whispers. For the rest, they were sitting or kneeling quietly, and a lot of people seemed to be preparing prayer books for a service which was obviously due to begin.

A Procession Emerges

The procession of clergy and altar servers emerged at last from the sacristy. One cleric was dressed in a purple cope, while a younger priest and the servers were clad in black cassocks and white surplices. The leading server carried a long brass pole with a crucifix draped in purple

at its peak. Behind him came a thurifer complete with empty thurible, and behind him again came two boys carrying three-foot-high candle-sticks which contained foot-high, unlit candles. Other boys followed the two older boys, backed them and led the clerics.

The procession moved slowly towards the centre of the church, stopped in front of the large curtain, bowed towards it in unison and then proceeded down the centre aisle to the rear of the church. Directly beneath us, the procession stopped and converged around what looked like a miniature barbecue. As soon as it arrived there, one of the altar servers began to rub together two pieces of metal.

Easter Vigil

It was at that moment that I realised what was happening. I knew now that I was about to see a replay of the Easter Vigil. I had heard and read a little over the years about this superstitious ceremony; about it representing a new beginning, a regeneration of tradition and like balderdash. I remembered reading somewhere that Catholics of the old traditional rite had treated it as an annual act of faith and a renewal of dedication to the old Church. I quickly picked up the Roman Missal and thumbed the pages until I found the prayers etc. to be recited during the Easter Vigil.

A description of Holy Saturday informed the reader that it was a day of deep mourning, a day which the Church spends at Our Lord's sepulchre meditating on His Passion and Death. There is no Mass on this day. It goes on, however, to say that the service should begin at such a time that the Mass of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday should begin about midnight. I now understood the absence of daylight and small children.

By now, the altar servers had managed to establish a fire in the barbecue and the priest was intoning prayers in Latin over what was obviously the New Fire, described in the Missal as the symbol of Christ whose teaching enlightens the minds of the faithful and whose grace enkindles their hearts. What a load of rot, thought I.

Now some charcoal was being taken from the fire and placed in the thurible and some powder was added, which

really made a lot of smoke; and then the priest walked all round the fire waving the thurible about. At this stage, the service looked more like some rite performed in a witch's coven than a ceremony in a church.

Next, a huge candle was produced and more Latin was said while the priest cut a cross on the candle and placed five silver studs into it after they had been incensed with the thurible. Following this, the candle was then lit from the fire; all, of course, to the accompaniment of intonations in Latin.

"Lumen Christi"

It then became obvious that the procession was about to proceed towards the front of the church and, as it did so, all the lights in the church went out. The only light now came from the huge candle which was being carried by the elder priest. They only went a few steps when the procession stopped and the priest, holding as high as possible the candle, sang in plain chant the words, "*Lumen Christi*", to which the choir answered, "*Deo Gratias*". They carried on up the centre aisle stopping three times and repeating the same two phrases, after which the procession of altar boys each lit a small candle of their own from the large candle. Next, the foot-high candles contained in the three-foot-high candlesticks carried by the two altar-servers were lit. The place was not quite so eerie now with a bit more light visible; but it made for a strange spectacle. The procession had now arrived in front of the purple curtain and the priest once more raised the big candle and repeated his message telling the congregation that this was the Light of Christ and the choir again answered for the congregation its thanks.

Now the servers dispersed and went among the congregation, all of whom held out candles to be lit, until the whole church was candlelit.

"Exultet"

The large or Paschal candle as I now knew it to be called, was placed in an enormous candle holder worked superbly in brass and standing more than seven feet tall. The young priest next placed a large book on a lectern.

Then, facing the people, he proceeded to sing *Exultet* which, according to my missal, was a joyful song of praise to the Risen Christ, who is represented by the lighted candle. The prayer goes on to praise the work of redemption which Our Lord has completed and to relate the wonder of this holy night; and, since the candle represents Christ, he prays that it may burn forever to drive away the darkness of this night and he ends the prayer asking aid for the Pope, the bishops and clergy, the whole Church and also our civic rulers that God may "turn their hearts to justice and peace". It did not sound very joyful to me as it was sung in Latin and sounded more like a dirge, being without guitars, drums or even an organ to act as accompanist. Still, I thought, it takes all kinds.

After he had finished, the congregation extinguished their candles and the church lighting was again switched on.

The people were next subjected to some readings from the Old Testament which I thought would go on for ever. Read in Latin, of course, the monotony was broken only after each reading by the elder priest inviting the congregation to kneel; and, no sooner had they knelt, than he asked them to stand again.

Next followed a series of Litanies calling on all sorts of people, Apostles and Disciples, Bishops and Confessors, Priests and Levites, etc. to pray for us.

Then came the blessing of the baptismal water, done at the Easter Vigil to show the close connection between Baptism and Our Lord's Resurrection. A vessel containing water was brought forward. The priest mumbled over it for a while then he reached out his hand and divided the water in the form of a cross, wiped his hand with a towel, mumbled some more, then touched the water with his hand, said some more prayers, then made the sign of the Cross three times over the water, saying in Latin as he did so, "Therefore I bless thee O creature of water, by the living God, by the true God, by the holy God who in the beginning, separated thee by his word from the dry land, whose spirit moved over thee". He then divided the water with his hand and threw some in every direction, carried on mumbling, breathed three times on the water in the form of a cross, then mumbled some more. The Paschal

Candle was next removed from its magnificent holder and dipped into the water, while the priest called in Latin for the sanctifying strength of the Holy Ghost to descend into all the water in the font. He repeated this three times; the candle was then returned to its holder. Some of the water was drawn off, after which the priest poured oil onto the water, then chrism into it, next oil and chrism, then mixed it all together with his hands. The vessel containing the now well and truly blessed water was carried in procession and poured into the Baptismal Font at the rear of the church.

Renewal of Baptism Vows

As the procession made its way from the font to the front of the church, the altar servers again mingled with the congregation relighting everyone's candles while the celebrant removed his purple cope and donned a white one, incensed the Paschal Candle, then proceeded to lead the congregation in a renewal of their Baptismal Vows. For the first time during the service he spoke in English asking the people the question, "Do you renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his pomps?" To each question the congregation answered that they did renounce them. He then asked them, "Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth". To which the people answered with conviction, "We do believe". "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, who was born into this world and suffered for us?" With equal sincerity the crowd answered, "We do believe". "And", he asked, "do you believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting?" To which the congregation answered in a magnificent yet simple profession of faith which left no doubt as to their belief in it, "We do believe".

The ceremony ended with the *Pater Noster* and the procession then retired to the sacristy.

Reflections

While preparations were going on in the sacristy for the next part of the service, the choir continued in its musical incantation of the Litanies. As they were doing this, I who,

following the previous stage in the ceremonies, was not quite so cynical about it all now, read in my missal the Church's explanation of Lent.

I learnt that for forty days the Church went into a time of great mourning during which the bells and organs were silenced, its crucifixes and statues were draped in purple and its people were encouraged to perform some act of self-discipline for the duration of the period and to offer up that act or acts in honour of Christ who gave His life for them at Calvary on Good Friday.

As the choir finished their intonations, the reel of film ran out and so I had to change to watch the second reel. While I did so, and before I sat back to watch the second part of the film, I had time to dwell on what I had just seen.

I had to admit that anyone with an open mind could not help but be impressed by the sincerity with which the ceremony had been conducted. The reverence and the respect had been more than obvious and the gentleness of the people came across. I, therefore, settled back to watch Pat 2 in a different frame of mind.

As the film opened, the scene was unchanged. The procession had not yet returned and the congregation was silently kneeling.

The screen went black, and I thought at first that something was wrong with the film until I realised that there was a glimmer of light and that it came from the Paschal Candle. A procession once again emerged from the vestry into the darkened church led by a thurifer and two boys carrying lighted candles followed by six torch bearers after which came the two older servers who preceded the younger priest who was still dressed simply in black cassock and white cota, while bringing up the rear was the celebrant now dressed in a gold chasuble, stole and maniple while on his head he wore a black biretta. The altar servers had also changed and now wore red cassocks and immaculate white cottas.

"Gloria in Excelsis Deo"

The procession came to a halt in front of the purple curtain with the celebrant in the centre. He removed his biretta and handed it to one of the older servers who, I

noticed, kissed that part of the hat which the celebrant had held. The thurible was handed to the celebrant who incensed the curtain. The celebrant, who had his back to the congregation as had all the procession, raised his arms in an upward and outward motion and as he did so, he sang out in a loud baritone voice, "Gloria in excelsis Deo". As he ended the Deo which he held for about four notes, the organ struck up the Gloria, the church bells peeled out, and an altar server rang a hand bell continually through the playing of the piece.

The noise was profound, yet musical. Its meaning was clear. If anyone was in doubt as to the interpretation of this part of the ceremony, the doubt was removed as the purple curtain dropped to the floor to reveal the sanctuary, which was bedecked with flowers and lit with every available vessel capable of holding a candle. The tabernacle veil and altar frontal were of matching embroidered gold, while the only electric light shone directly on to a gold crucifix, which stood on the throne above the tabernacle. Six towering candles were lit, three either side at the back of the altar in readiness for High Mass. Immediately the organ began to play and, after the curtain had been dropped, altar servers quickly removed the purple drapes from the statues and crucifixes around the church and placed vases of flowers in front of each, while at the same time, the sanctuary lamp was lit. The purple curtain was folded and carried away, the altar gates were opened and the procession moved onto the High Altar to participate in the Mass. The lighting was switched on and the Mass proceeded. Christ had risen.

Never had I seen such a transformation from sorrow to joy. It had been breathtaking in its simplicity. The congregation was aware of what it was about. They took pleasure in the ceremonial rite to give praise to their Creator, because they knew that it was now Easter Sunday and they were remembering how Christ was risen on this day for their salvation.

I was Moved

I was deeply moved.

The celebrant conducted his Mass with his back to the

people, in keeping with the old rite and his reverence was obvious to see. He was offering up this Mass as he would all his Masses to the honour and glory of his Maker and he carried the people with him through the mystery and miracle of their liturgy. It was inspiring to me to witness such respect and honour not only from the priests but from the altar-servers whom I felt appreciated the privilege of being allowed to participate in serving the Mass, and also from the people present, who felt joined as one with the celebrant whom they saw as their intermediary with God.

We passed humbly through the offertory, majestically through the consecration and then came to the Communion which was beautiful to see. The miracle of the Mass was being brought now to the people who thronged to the altar rail and accepted on their tongues what they believed to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. I thought the procession of the faithful would never end, and the reverence with which these people received their Communion was impressive to say the least.

I Wept

As the Mass drew to its close, so my questions were answered. I knew now where we had gone wrong; we had left out God. Somewhere we had made ourselves God, and in so doing, we had lost our reason for being. We had taken away from the people whom we were meant to serve, their reason for being members of the Catholic Church. We had made man the be-all and the end-all of everything; and, in so doing, we were living a lie.

These people in their simple wisdom and through their unflinching faith, knew that man was subject to God and they cherished that knowledge. They adored and worshipped, respected, revered and loved Him, and we, the presumed intellectuals, had taken away from our fellow Catholics that right, that privilege, that feeling of belonging. It was small wonder that our churches were empty.

I Know what to Do

I knew now what I must do. I must seek out and join the small band of Catholics who, although driven underground, still practised their religion in the old Latin rite with as much, if not more fervour than ever.

Ecology and Original Sin

ARCHBISHOP ROBERT J. DWYER

THE Poetic muse was in full possession of His Lordship, Bishop Reginald Heber. "What though the spicy breezes", he sang, strumming his tuneful lyre, "Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,/ Though every prospect pleases/ And only man is vile:" when here, quite suddenly, inspiration left him, and he plodded dully on, for this last third of the 20th century to complete his stanzas and give climax to his song.

For what he proposed was the conversion of the benighted heathen to respectable Protestant Episcopalianism; whereas we all know his concern should have been ecology and how to keep Ceylon from pollution.

Only Man is Vile

He should have pleaded for the integrity of Greenland's icy mountains and Java's jungled plains, no matter what happened to the heathen inhabitants. The fewer the better and the ideal would be the extermination of nature's curse, the human species. For through the golden tongue of Heber we hear to day the cold, unimpassioned voice of old John Calvin himself: Only man is vile!

It is being noted with mounting frequency of late that there is a strong resurgence of Puritanism in this whole contemporary crusade for ecology, a recrudescence of Calvinism in the demand for an unpolluted world, secured largely at the expense of doing away with man as the chief offender.

That this should be coupled with an almost masochistic moral permissiveness, which would point to a conviction that man is too far gone to be worth saving, or too vile to awaken any other reaction than acute disgust, is not really surprising. Any form of philosophical or theological extremism, whether it be materialism or idealism, Calvinism or Rousseauism, is bound, sooner or later, to succumb to its opposite error.

Confused Minds

Which is why there is so much confusion in the minds of so many of those who aspire to leadership in current thought and action. They begin with the thesis that man is perfectible, and wind up with the cynical conclusion that he is nothing but a horrible mess; or they start from the principle that matter is universal and find themselves more and more taking refuge in fantasies and dreams, natural or induced.

We are all in favor of a better world; who wouldn't be! We too would savor the spicy breezes wafted from Ceylon's shore, should our wanderlust ever tempt us so far afield, or the scent of the pines borne seaward from "the continuous words where rolls the Oregon". But to imagine that all pollution must or can be done away with, that every human occupation or industry which would exploit nature is sinful and an abomination, is arrant nonsense and gravely dangerous.

Between the extremes of depleting and despoiling nature and depriving the human species of its necessary means of sustenance there might be sought out a reasonable mean of equilibrium. But your Puritan will not hear of compromise, and your Materialist couldn't care less.

A Form of Fanaticism

The root danger here is a form of fanaticism which is willing to sacrifice or to ignore every human consideration, every human right, every dictate of conscience, every law, divine or human, in order to conquer its goal. It scourges the human family from time to time, now in milder form, now more grievously, but never without inflicting harm and causing grave injustice.

Religious persecution has figured largely in this sorry history, though often used as a cloak for more subtle fanaticisms, cultural or radical. Its most powerful manifestation in our times is, of course, the Communist conquest of half the world, not by force of conviction or conversion, but by sheer military might.

It is symptomatic of the appalling deterioration of the moral fabric of the Free World that it displays less and less of a disposition to deal honestly with the reality of the Communist threat, and takes refuge in a kind of dream-

world, where all men are inspired by good will and kindly fellow-feeling, and no one would even think of hurting a fly.

One of its ugliest and most brutal manifestations was that of National Socialism headed by the sinister figure of Adolf Hitler. His memory fades in the haze of yesteryear, but it should not be overlooked that he succeeded simply because enough of his own people agreed with him in principle, or sufficiently so at first to have no logical reason to withdraw their support when he proceeded to carry the principles to their radical conclusions.

Genocide and the German Medical Fraternity

It is eminently worth recalling that it was not he who invented genocide; long before his advent to power the German medical fraternity had agreed that the "expert's" decision was final as to the life and death of a person.

And this, precisely, in behalf of the "quality of life", the identical argument set forth by the Supreme Court of the United States in its recent attack on its own basic principle, "Equal Justice under Law". That the distinguished editors of *Time* should applaud the abortion decision is again hardly surprising; they have long held the torch lighting fools their way to dusty death.

Theologians the Chief Offenders

But to our mind, groping as it is in the semi-darkness of this night battle, the chief offenders are not the ecological fanatics who would eliminate man to preserve the park-like vistas of unspoilt nature, nor the Supreme Court in the mood of greybeards at play with the fundamentals of human rights, nor even the Communists and Nazis with their bloody visions of world conquest.

One can conceive some palliation of their folly, some mitigation of their hubris. They might plead invincible ignorance, or some psychological distemper which robs them of their power to see straight or to think rightly. And there is always the old adage, "Whom the gods will to destroy, they first make mad".

No, the real villains of the piece, in our book (and we have read one or two), are those so-called Catholic theologians who are working so hard to empty the concept of

Original Sin of all meaning. They are the enemy within who would deliberately weaken the defences of the Church at a time when all she stands for is subjected to attack more vicious and violent than anything we have known over the past milenium, be it Catharism (which it strikingly resembles), or the Reformation, or the Enlightenment, or Rousseauism (which it resembles still more strikingly).

How these theologians back and fill, how they squirm and equivocate, how they go through all manner of contortions and mental gymnastics in order to obviate reality, void the dogma of all significance without actually coming to the point of outright denying it!

How it is reduced to some sort of a cultural handicap, a social aberration, a mere failure to respond properly to the invitation of God—anything but what the Church plainly says it is and defines it to be: the positive sin of our First Parents visited in its effects upon the entire human family (with one glorious exception), until atoned for by the redeeming grace of Christ. That as a result we are born into this world lacking grace, needing it, our nature weakened, wounded, not irreparably, but to a degree which robs what we do of ourselves, unaided by God's grace, of that perfection which God intended for our works from the beginning.

Reducing Dogma to Fairytale

For this in truth is the heart of the matter, the real root of the debate. Our criticism is not aimed at those who would essay the task (not so fearfully difficult as come imagine) of demonstrating that between the findings of science and the facts of divine revelation there is fixed no chaos, but rather a bridgeable gap, a meeting place for reasonable minds. Nor is it directed at those who would seek more precise formulation for the irreducible dogma, to present it in such a manner that its full impact and luminosity may be felt and seen. Our stricture is of those who would reduce dogma to fairytale or a fable told by an idiot God.

Freedom has many faces and, as such, bears different meanings for the many who speak of it. In this article, Henry Edwards sorts some of them out in his usual entertaining fashion.

Aspects of Freedom

HENRY EDWARDS

THE "Lay" State may seem to many—to many Catholics—an advantage. I have been less and less sure; for you cannot be really neutral about what has to do with the final happiness of a man and the Lay State encourages irreligion until, for all practical purposes, it has installed in glory a positivist indifferentism supported by such rituals as the Sunday car wash, and the reading of what purports to be the news of the world. I almost forgot. There is an established Church of England in England and people for the most part there behave just as if it did not exist, except on a few State occasions or when Parliament has to underwrite a new prayer book. But the English are notoriously a superbly illogical people and some Englishmen even take pride in their illogic. Roughly speaking, the English (as far as there are as many English in England as I would like to see) like their established church, providing it carries out the State ceremonies or occasionally in times of great stress bids the Nation assemble for divine worship. I think there is a not too subtle difference between calling an Englishman an Anglican or calling him "Church of England". The former carries with it the idea of the man's being a practising member; the latter carries the idea of his being nominally a member; e.g., when asked what his religion is before his taking an oath in a court of law.

The English must forgive me as the Scots will not—or the Irish. There is the Kirk of Scotland and it really does mean something to very many Scots. It even puts the Queen in her place as a laywoman when she attends the assembly. Despite the Wee Frees and many other denominations of which the Catholic Church is the most important,

if only because it exists where John Knox never went, I do not hear—and I am in constant touch with Scotsmen, especially Nationalists—a great hubbub for disestablishment. Ideally it seems most proper that Caesar should display in some manner his subordination to the things which are of God and not regard them as merely matters of diffused opinion. The Danes, by the way, have an established Church; but this is really a misnomer because, although most of it is Lutheran, any denomination may ask to be placed in the State Church so that the State will pay the ministers' salaries.

For weal or woe, then, my land has no State Church. It is said by my chapel friends—it follows that in my land there can be no nonconformists—that all this "freedom" is a good thing. But we bump up here against what most people mean by "freedom" in this context and in many other contexts. This "freedom" is no more than the privilege (or right) of doing in religious matters what one wants to do (with some exceptions which may become important if England imports more people from African or Asiatic cultures), or not to do. This is a poverty-stricken sort of freedom; but it seems to be one which almost certainly most people think about when they think about freedom of religion.

My Land is not Free

I want to be a free man in a free church in a free land. And I am a Catholic, supposed to be burdened by dogmas under a strict discipline of the iron Roman sort, living in a land which I, as a Nationalist, do not regard as free in my sense of the word. I had better tackle this last controversial matter first if only that I shall be uttering what many readers of *Christian Order* may find disagreeable. My land has what the almost forgotten Statute of Westminster called "representative government", what the Statute compared with "responsible government". The citizens elect representatives to a House of Commons set in England as do the citizens of Scotland. This House always has an enormous majority of English M.P.'s together with Irish Unionists like Mr. Paisley, but also like Mr. Enoch Powell who is in this a very different man to tackle on this subject. The result is that, if every Scottish and Welsh M.P. voted against

some measure which Wales and Scotland—whose Nationalists together form the third largest Party—abhorred, there would be enough English M.P.'s from London's M.P.'s and those of a few other English conurbations to outvote them. There is a nice custom, however, which does provide, because of the existence of Scottish law, perhaps, that in some matters affecting Scotland, the House is made up mainly of Scot's M.P.'s, though today there will be at least three Welsh M.P.'s listening. What this means is that neither Scotland nor Wales is a truly free country; that is, a country which has complete charge of its own affairs, which include foreign affairs. It is not merely that my country should be politically so independent as to stop Birmingham and Liverpool from raping new valleys for cheap water, but that it should conclude special treaties with, say, Norway and Denmark and have its ambassador in Washington. That is what "responsible government" means; and "responsible government" means a free government so far, indeed, as any country has free government. (By the way it would do immense good if some of us would distinguish between autarchy and autarky—see the Oxford dictionary.)

There are always constraints on some pure—unworldly—freedom for any nation. The matter was considered excellently by Burke in his *Reflections*. Such constraints come from many sources, chiefly the sources of international complexity and the need in politics, which is an art, to pursue the best, if limited, means. And this sheds a light which some may call a shadow on man's general freedom.

Not Good to go Astray

Before the Fall man and woman enjoyed a true freedom. Let me put aside the fact that they were endowed with sanctifying grace, which is a fundamental truth. They had what I may call integrity: whether, as some theologians teach, they received such a gift prior to their being given sanctifying grace, is beside the point. The integrity is in the narrow sense a freedom from what old-fashioned folk called "irregular desire". St. Paul calls such desire a sin because it flows from sin and makes one inclined to sin. Such personal desire is a torrent of human desire, even in the most well-governed nations. And the fact must always be kept well in mind when we think of a free nation. Mr.

Attlee in a speech at Ashbridge before the last great war declared that it was part of human freedom to make mistakes. This is a fundamental and very common error. "What greater evil", St. Augustine asked, "is there than for a soul to go astray?" What greater evil? He might have said that a greater evil arises when nations go astray; but, to some extent, all nations will go astray, such is the fact of irregular desire even among saints; and wise rulers are not exempt, and certainly not fairly wise electors.

Man before the Fall had other gifts, e.g., freedom from suffering and death. Some may object to the fact that because Adam and Eve (or call them John and Mary) did not suffer, they were inactive. They received orders to till the ground and to be masters of the beasts. They participated in the work, in some measure, of their Creator. They possessed a knowledge of natural and supernatural truths infused by God. This natural knowledge does not mean that they could with ease make the most sophisticated computers. Such knowledge was potent and we may comment that, had there been no Fall, our present worldly condition of great bloodshed and abominable wars would not coincide with journeys to the moon. Sentimental commentators who wonder how it comes about that men walk on the moon while there is wanton death and civil war even in these Isles have not taken account of Satan's fearful promise, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil".

It is a defect in man as he is that his faculty of choice is such that he may choose wrongly. The saints in heaven are perfectly free but they do not choose wrongly. It cannot be over-emphasised that man before the Fall had utter free-will according to his condition. If we follow people who declare that making mistakes is a consequence of human free will, we are virtually saying that man received free will after he discovered he was naked and was ashamed.

So far, perhaps, not a few readers will agree with me, and I include my Evangelical Protestant friends such as those who are working with Catholics in the Christian Affirmation Campaign, in order to drive out the wolves in the sheepfold. What my Evangelical friends would at once deny is my claim that, as a Catholic, by which I mean a Christian who gives his loyalty to the see of Rome in all

matters touching faith and morals, I belong to a free Church. Indeed, this claim is such that very large numbers of Christians including, alas, not a few who call themselves Catholics, deny. Let me tackle the Catholics who virtually deny it. They say in one way or another that things seemed to be going much in the right direction after Vatican II when all of a sudden came *Humanae Vitae* with all that vital Papal document demanded of the faithful. Among such Catholics are those who unashamedly countenance and canvass opinions condemned by the Pope, and tell me that the Church must be much more democratic.

Democracy and Freedom

Democracy: Oh, what a "blessed" word; like Wesley's Mesopotamia to the old lady who told him what a blessing she derived from hearing it. The word is what I may call a "sooth" word. Utter it; and a man thinks he has answered a question of right or wrong. This is because, for many of us, we have resigned ourselves to the belief—or even hold it to be excellent—that truth is the product of numbers, of superior numbers. It tends in these Isles to make us think that M.P.'s are delegates, which Burke showed they were not. It even suggests to us that a law made by a democracy is like unto the laws of the Medes and Persians which altered not. There are many definitions of "democracy" all more or less faulty. There is one I do happen to favour: "Democracy is that system of government which enables minorities to become majorities". There is fault even in that because it also suggests that law is the product of numbers; but, at least it does suggest that a law may be changed or utterly repealed like the incorporation of Wales in 1536. The peculiar circumstance that England dislikes outright repeal but prefers to change things step by step (so that no one notices that at length there is a repeal) is almost irrelevant save that it shows the English mind at work. Human law is the product — rightly speaking — of a mode of the undeviating reason, darkened though it is by the Fall. Nicholas Berdyaev in his series of essays entitled *The End of Our Time* called in question this, to him, characteristically western-Europe concept of democracy, which sets up a parity of justice and injustice, truth and untruth.

It is necessary to free ourselves from regarding human freedom in society as necessarily bound up with an allegedly democratic government. It is also necessary to free ourselves from regarding religious freedom as necessarily bound up with some ecclesial community which runs its synods by voting. (It is very significant that the Quakers—the Society of Friends—have never used the system of voting in any of their meetings, business or committee or what you will, but by what they call “the sense of the meeting”, a concensus, one must suppose, discerned by the clerk of the meeting. But the Quakers would insist that their’s is the freest of religious bodies.)

Voting and Freedom

As I had many years practical experience of Quaker practice in getting minutes arrived at without voting—even accepting new members without voting—I may claim to have discovered that voting may well be beside the point in our talk about freedom. On the other hand I began to have what Quakers called years ago “a stop in the mind” about their claim to be free from creeds. To start with I began to be suspicious about “freedom from”. I am still suspicious. I do not, of course, deny that it is right to speak about freedom from noxious things and conditions; but, in that an evil is a privation, freedom from an evil means a freedom for a something which has being, or more being than what has less being. But were “the creeds” privations? As I looked at them, they were affirmations and called to mind what was most certainly considered to have great being. Try not so much to read, but to exclaim the Nicene Creed and you will find that it rings and rings again like a series of acclamations pointing to magnificent discoveries ending with *et vitam venturi saeculi*. The Creed commonly called Athanasian demands, I concede, a certain acquaintance with the language of theology, but even that is worth having. But I was told as a young and then not so young Quaker that such acquaintance was almost a hinderance. I began to think otherwise. Moreover, what tickled by fancy was that that creed started by demanding that to be safe it was necessary to believe in the Catholic Faith, which was such and then, after tackling this Faith in detail as it concerns the Trinity and the sacred humanity of the Son, it

seemed to be giving a stark antinomy in that it ended by telling me that to be safe was to have done good. How, I wondered, could such a creed have survived the centuries so? Of course, an antinomy is not always a contradiction; and this one led to my looking at what the Catholic Church had to say about faith and works—saying something which to me was a transcending of all that I had so far understood in a Quaker and a partly Protestant milieu, where salvation by faith alone or salvation by works alone jostled each other for supremacy.

Catholics Made Freedom For

Suppose that the Creeds were not “outworn” even if no one supposed they said all that could be known about God? Of course, as St. Gregory of Nyssa and other mainly eastern fathers were at pains to tell us, we cannot know anything about God as He Is in Himself, for as such he is hidden and not out-going. But since he has, so to speak, energised in such manner as to exteriorise Himself, we know much because He wanted us to know much and then there was this exciting matter of development. Freedom seemed now to be freedom *for*. And the gist of the matter is that, pace my Protestant friends, whether Evangelical or Modernist, being a Catholic is the way to have a very great freedom *for*. I believe that my Evangelical friends do to some extent also possess some of this freedom *for*. I deny that my modernist friends (and I have a few) possess it at all, because for them the rebel is right only at the moment of revolt, so that yesterday’s modernism is today’s old hat. They have confused change with development. They are almost proud of sailing uncharted seas without any real guide or compass. And it is not a freedom *for* to be sunk or stuck on a sand bar—awaiting perhaps a new modernism which may lift them off a sand bar or raise them up only to suffer loss once again.

Chesterton said all this so much better in his not too well known small book, *The Catholic Church and Conversion*, which would do large numbers of Catholics immense good to read. He showed therein that a man who stops being merely in a kind of rage at Popery and comes to the point of “indifference”, (used still in the slightly archaic sense of

judges being asked to try cases indifferently, that is, impartially) is on the edge of being fair to the Catholic Church; and, when that happens, he begins to be "trapped", though not as no-popery men suppose. The truth, wrote G. K. C., was a kind of magnet and it is the truth which makes us free. The man now being fair to the Catholic Church is being drawn towards it. G. K. C. writes, as an afterthought, upon the vital matter of grace which I should have wanted him to have considered much earlier, but then he was a very different Catholic from me. It is actual grace which is drawing the fair man towards the Church. It is actual grace which strives as the man fears and then decides to come inside the citadel of truth.

Freedom is for Truth

But there was one allegation I heard again and again against the claim I have made concerning the Catholic Church and freedom. It was that when a man became a Catholic, he had to stop thinking freely. The allegation might well have been made at the point when a man becomes a Catholic. Were the allegation to be examined just at this point it might well be withdrawn since an immense amount of hard thinking has gone on and is going on within the Catholic Church on what is really a difficulty; namely that a difference in efficacy concerning grace, even at this point, lies in the grace or in human freedom. The Church tackled the matter in its earlier years when it declared that Pelagius had blundered in making overmuch of the will and not enough of grace. The Church examined the answers of Luther and later the Jansenists, and declared that they had blundered by virtually denying the element of free will. What is left? Very much indeed. There are several schools of thought within the Church which provide solutions; and a man might spend a lifetime by examining them in the search for a truth, or rather for a theology about the truth. Now, to say the least—and supposing that the Catholic Church is the repository of truth—the freedom that exists within the Church is enormous.

What we have to understand well is that freedom has its gyves. Better, truth itself has its gyves. If I suppose, as indeed I do, that the Catholic Church teaches what is true,

it must tie itself to the everlasting truth. Again, I think of G. K. C., this time in, I believe, his *Orthodoxy* where he writes that a train that keeps on the rails is really free rather than the train which goes off them. Whatever transport we have in mind, there must be some kind of gyves. The men who have gone to the moon had large tracts of space, as we at present tend to think of them, to wander in; but to leave, land, start back and arrive home again required immense care. Indeed, the more complex be our complex world, the more gyves it must have—so much so, in fact, that I sympathise with those who dislike the complexity. But there may be many schools of thought in this or that discipline upon the maintenance of life within complexity. Some may be wrong, many may be more or less right. To return to my subject, anyone who studies a book on Catholic dogmatics, be he the ordinary Catholic or the ordinary Christian outside the Church or the ordinary man of any religion or of none, will be greatly enlightened at the extraordinary large number of allowed theologies within the Church and he may also discover that there are many teachings yet to be determined as of Faith. Because of such matters the Catholics can say in a sense unknown to many modern men certain ancient and serene words: *Romanus civis sum*: I am not a slave. The Catholic may conclude that he has been trapped — trapped by the truth; but he cannot suppose he has been tricked and has sold his birth-right for a Mass.

I am satisfied up to a point with what I have here written — as far, indeed, as I can write; but I believe I have made too much of the fact that I write as a member of the Latin rite of the Catholic Church. "The Church is at home among all nations", St. Augustine wrote. And this must mean that, as Pope John wrote in his *Mater et Magistra* in several paragraphs, the Church does not aim at uniformity but unity. In the most exact sense Europe is not the Faith — Belloc's great words have a meaning only to be found when we feel the Bellocian brag. We must do our best, we of the Latin rite, to understand that what I have written is as true for the Ethiopian and the Armenian and the Indian of the Malankara rite as it is of *Roman* Roman Catholics. All of us may discover that we may be free men in a free church in a free country.

Una Voce : Resolutions

(October 7th & 8th, 1978)

THE delegates of the member-associations of the International Federation Una Voce, meeting in Turin, Italy, on October 7th and 8th for their bi-annual General Assembly under the Chairmanship of the Federation's President, Dr. Eric M. de Saventhem, unanimously resolved as follows :

Resolutely to pursue their apostolate for the restoration of sacred and dignified traditional liturgy and for bringing to an end the scandal of liturgical anarchy and chaos which every day become more manifest in Catholic churches all over the world;

To prepare, in the form of a White Paper, a collection of the numerous requests sent to the Holy See for the re-admission, on terms of equality, of the traditional rites of the Latin Church : from petitions signed by many tens of thousands of faithful, to appeals and observations which leading personalities—Catholics as well as noncatholics—have addressed to Rome either singly or collectively with the same objective, all of which seem so far to have gone unheard;

To work not only for the healing of division between Catholics, but also to strive that all separated Christians become reunited in the profession and life of one and the same faith, without however allowing concern for unity to weaken fidelity to Catholic doctrine recently re-stated in the *Credo* of Pope Paul VI. The member-associations of *Una Voce* therefore pledges themselves to make this fundamental text better known and respected in all levels of the Holy Roman Church.

It is not clear whether or not an Ecumenical Council was needed to cure the Church of the rigidities that beset it twenty years and more ago. In the event, a Council was convened and we are still suffering from the excesses that followed in its wake at the hands of so-called experts. Out of the confusion and the suffering two things are clear. The Church now is ready to go out to the world of men as, perhaps, not before; and there is a Pope who wants to go out to that world in the name of Christ. In the process of doing so and calling Catholics to follow him in this task, he is sowing within their hearts the seeds of reconciliation that will heal, in Christ, the wounds of existing division.

CURRENT COMMENT

Restoration

THE EDITOR

SOME years ago, I remember being much taken with a remark made by Malcolm Muggeridge to the effect that the Catholic Church which, hitherto, had stood so valiantly against the assaults of an increasingly secularist world, had now—incomprehensibly and overnight at it were—surrendered to it, just when victory seemed to be coming its way. The defenders of the Fortress, which had resisted all attacks hitherto, had issued out of its gates waving white flags just when final victory seemed to be theirs. The Church, in other words, had surrendered to the world. That was the verdict and it was shared by many Catholics who felt hard between the eyes the shattering blow that came, like a heavy-weight boxer's punch, with the spate of change that followed in the immediate wake of Vatican II. It was a bewildering and devastating time made none the easier to bear for those most afflicted, by the apparent inability of

bishops and clergy to strengthen the battered faith of those in their care. The teaching authority of the Church—the *Magisterium* — appeared as temporarily in collapse; for many, their Church was now scarcely credible; it seemed that it had lost its way.

Was it Surrender?

Had it? Overcome by secularism, broken by neo-modernist attack, was it in process of surrendering to the world *or* adapting, as distinct from accommodating, itself to it, the better to meet the needs of the contemporary situation? I believe the latter, whilst hastening to add that the timing, manner and pace of the attempted adaptation was, on the whole, prayerless, unthinking and insensitive; in consequence, clumsy and, at times, cruel, almost beyond compare. Moreover, the process was not helped because so often directed at sub-episcopal level by so called experts who were themselves neo-modernist in outlook, if not also by conviction. And it must be said in addition—in the light of the evidence we have—that the ambiguities within conciliar texts, some of which were intended, presented the so-called experts with the opportunity of imposing their views on whole sections of the Faithful within the Church, who were consigned to their care by bishops unwilling and/or afraid to do their duty. The picture is not pretty. I have been over the ground in previous articles and will not repeat myself here. The basic question, of course, is whether the original impulse to convene the Council was correct. Was Pope John right to throw open the windows, irrespective of whether or not he realised that no gentle breeze, but the gale of the world itself would howl through the Church once they were opened? I am not clear as to whether this question can be answered at this time. We are perhaps too near to the event to be able to pronounce objective judgment.

Needs of the Church on the Eve of the Council

What is clear to me now in retrospect, but was not clear at the time, is that the Church, on the eve of the Council (if not long before), had reached the point where it was clogged by rigidities that had built themselves within and

around it and with a view to the preservation of its institutional position. The accent appeared to be on the preservation of the Institution at all costs. This called for the rigid maintenance of precedent. Traditional practice and stance were thought essential to—and often subconsciously identified with—the upholding of traditional and true belief. Under such circumstances the exercise of authority tended to drift into authoritarianism. Obedience turned into conformism, as distinct from the shared responsibility between superior and subject that it should be. Initiative, under such circumstances, was anything but easy. Moreover, its need appeared unnecessary to those whose concentration on the preservation in being of the Institutional Church dulled their sensibility inevitably to the needs not only of the “world outside”, but of the Faithful within its walls. The Church could not reach them. The answer, too often, was that they should reach the Church. The Fortress Church stood strong on the hill. Let them come to it. The shepherd had become a door-keeper. There was a flow of converts, indeed, who rejoiced in the truth within the fortress walls; but many without—along with an increasing number within—were not attracted by the Fortress. What they wanted was the significance of Christ in their lives; an enrichment — that was their need. Flexibility, *not* of belief (as the Neo-Modernists so foolishly thought and think), but of practice was called for, if the initiative was to be released that would bring Christ through the Church to the men of the contemporary world. But initiative itself would fail unless coming from those within the Church who were themselves in love with Christ, for this love was what men themselves really needed and, in fact, wanted; and how could it be given to them except by those who had Him already deep within their hearts?

Was a Council Needed?

In my view, these were the basic requirements if the Church was to take Christ effectively to the world of men—holiness of life amongst the takers, particularly clergy and religious, for which there can be no substitute, and flexibility of practice within a framework of true and traditional belief, without which the initiative that flexibil-

ity allows is of no use whatsoever. I have not the intention here of going into the measures needed to meet these requirements. What I cannot see easily is that an Ecumenical Council was the best means of meeting them. I would have thought, rather, that they could have been met unobtrusively and effectively by quiet and thoughtful measures from within. Whether I am right here or not I do not know. Neither do I know whether such reform was possible at the time. In the event, an Ecumenical Council was called that brought in its wake upheaval in the Church, to say nothing of the agony suffered by so many at the hands of the self-appointed "experts" who followed in its wake. On the credit side, however, I would suggest that the Church is open now to men, as it was not before. The Fortress has gone, the Church is where the People of God are; and there is a new flexibility that gives scope for initiative, despite the somewhat foolish concentration on structural alteration and the build-up of bureaucracies that too many unthinking Progressives within the Church have seen as the way to salvation. They have done so because they are out of touch with the real needs of men. This is understandable, for they tend to move in closed circles. What I find difficult to understand is that they should be appointed to the posts they occupy within the Church. There is room for change here—in a big way. Finally, the concept of authority has altered. The Pope is Supreme Pastor and the Faithful his brothers and sisters in Christ; no longer August Pontiff and the Faithful his subjects. He is the servant of the servants of God, which does not mean servility to the world of men, but the seeking out of their true interests and firmly effective action in their regard. Authoritarianism, in other words, is fading from the Church and, with it, the conformism that was its complement. Obedience appears rightly and increasingly as shared responsibility. The concept has penetrated downwards. There is an ease of relationships within the Church that was not there before. Out of this a flowering should come. There is still much silliness, particularly perhaps where Religious are concerned. I think it is on the way out.

What I do not see within this reasonably bright picture, marred as it has been in the making by post-conciliar

excess, is any real evidence of any significant recognition on the part of clergy and religious that their real need today is for holiness; that, before they can give Christ to others, they must have Him deep within themselves; that renewal for them is basically this. Where prayer seems to be coming from today is small groups of young people who want to take Christ to their hearts and who gain strength from the company of others who want to do the same.

Church now Moving to Meet those Needs

I found it interesting to read recently Peter Hebblethwaite's, *The Year of Three Popes* (Fount Original, Collins; 95p; pp. 211), for it seemed to corroborate my thought that the Church was now moving in the direction outlined above. There are quarrels I would pick over certain points with the Author, notably those within his "Theological Appendix"; but the general picture he paints is, I think, a true one. It is of a Church, in the persons of three Popes, moving with difficulty and sometimes with faltering steps—particularly during the time of Paul VI—in an endeavour to take to herself the world of men; to give Christ to them, rather than dominate them with her power; not to "kneel before the world" as Maritain in his old age accused her of doing, but to serve it with the truth.

What Pope Paul Saw

Pope Paul himself was left with what might be described as the unfinished business of an uprooted Council. He decided to complete it. He need not have done so. He could have closed it. He saw it through to the end because convinced, I believe, that the Church had to change her style and her pastoral approach to meet the needs of the contemporary world. Put crudely, she had to be thrown into the stream of men—involved with mankind; to share their confusion and their sufferings, to flounder with them, if she was really to help them. It would cost her much—how much, perhaps, Pope Paul never realised; and so the Church was thrown. I do not know whether this surmise of mine is correct. It is mine, by the way, and not Hebblethwaite's, at least not in so many words. History will be its judge and judgment cannot be yet. The dust will have

to settle first; but I believe that this is the way things were with Pope Paul. I believe, too, that history, on balance, will be kind to him, despite the suffering brought, however inadvertently, to so many; the sleight of hand that *appeared* — I make no accusation — to attend the downgrading of Cardinal Mindszenty, the introduction of the New Mass and the treatment in general of Archbishop Lefebvre whose stance, I believe, is misunderstood by Hebblethwaite in his book. The same applies to Traditionalists in general. They were not in love with nostalgia. They were seen by Pope Paul, I believe, as closed to the world; that was their trouble in his eyes. There would be a return to the Fortress Church were they to gain the upper hand. This was the last thing the Pope wanted. Therefore their pleas went unheard. They were consigned, in consequence, to a wilderness of suffering and pain. Many are still there. I can never agree myself that they deserved such treatment. History, once again, will be the judge of that.

I am left with the thought that its answer may be to the effect that the rigid ties of the pre-conciliar Church could have been overcome and the necessary initiatives released in other gentler ways; and that the growth in holiness, essential to those who were to take Christ to men, was not strongly in evidence in the post-conciliar years. On the contrary—and maybe because of its lack—seminaries were empty, defections from the priesthood and religious life multiplied, the falling off in Mass attendance was massive and marked. Yet, none of this could be recovered by a simple return to the old ways and nothing more. For by now the walls of the Fortress had been breached from within. What the future needed was the reshaping of the new. The opening was there, however clumsily achieved. It was for the successors of Pope Paul to take advantage of it.

What the Papacy Needed

What this appears to have meant in the minds of the Cardinals at the Conclave that elected his successor was that their choice had to be of a pastoral pope who was, at one and the same time, utterly firm in his allegiance to the traditional and true doctrine of the Church and de-

terminated to reach out, particularly to the poor, the oppressed and the young, of the old world and the new, within and without the Church; who would carry Christ to them and inspire others to do so because he himself carried Christ in his heart. The time for pomp and circumstance was past. What was needed was the simplicity that goes with brotherly love. Remarkably, as it seems, both John Pauls met these requirements to a remarkable degree. This more than anything else, has convinced me of late of the power of the Holy Spirit within the Church. Andrew Greely and his computer are such nonsense beside it.

John Paul I and those Needs

It seemed to the Cardinals at the first Conclave that they had found their man in Albano Luciani, the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, who took the name of John Paul I, indicating, thereby the path he was determined to tread. I found Hebblethwaite's account of Pope John Paul I—his life, brief reign and the Conclave that elected him—percipient and enlightening. To judge by his life as priest, bishop and Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, Pope John Paul I was exactly the man to take advantage of the opening Pope Paul had so agonizingly created. This comes out very clearly in Hebblethwaite's pages. The details—necessarily compressed, but pleasantly and percipiently presented—reveal Pope John Paul I, not as an outstanding theologian, but as one who had worked hard and well at his theology. It was clear during his early days as a priest and clearer still during his time as Bishop of Vittorio Veneto—he was ordained Bishop by Pope John XXIII in St. Peter's on December 27th, 1958—that his great interest was not in theology as such, but in making it relevant in terms of everyday life. What he was after was the relationship between religion and life; the power of religion to enrich the whole of man's living was what the men of the contemporary world needed to understand and what, in consequence, the Church had to show them. You might say, then, that the new Pope was a man of Catechetics in the best and truest sense of that most abused word. Naturally enough, there went with this a strong emphasis on the

pastoral side of his work as priest, bishop and Cardinal Patriarch of Venice. Pope John Paul was not a man who sought position or power. He sought, instead, people for Christ's sake in order that he might bring them Christ as the light of their lives. And he was able to do this the more easily because of his unaffected and unobtrusive simplicity that made communication with them on a personal basis not a burden, but a joy. His outlook and his personality were suited admirably to the needs of the contemporary age. Both were set against a background of mental toughness that is the enviable legacy of the North Italian peasant/worker. I have seen it and admired it in my many North Italian missionary friends in Africa. Mental and physical endurance of a high order are combined in them with a striking capacity for personal communication that makes them, in my view, the best *pioneering* missionaries that the Church has at the moment. As I read Hebblethwaite's account of the new Pope's early years I could see him very easily as one of the Italian Fathers I found myself sitting with in the evenings as I made my way through far-flung mission stations in North-East Kenya during ten days last Christmas.

An Illustration of the Above

An illustration of what has just been said, some quotations from Hebblethwaite's book will not be out of place. He writes on page 93 :

"It was characteristic of Luciani that he should have been concerned not with theology as an abstract study but with its implementation in everyday life. In a later interview (1969) with Alberto Papuzzi he said that for him the central religious problem was 'the gap between a purely formal and nominal Christianity, based merely on ideas, and an existential Christianity that finds expression in life'. No doubt this perception of the problem matured gradually. But his concern that faith should move, to use Newman's phrase, 'from notional to real assent', had been one of the constants of his pastoral work".

Again, on page 97, his remedy, as Bishop of Vittoria Veneto, for the post-conciliar confusion that was ravaging

the Church was simple, surely true and predominantly necessary today :

“The remedy”, he said, in a conversation with Zizola, “is to proclaim the truth but in a positive way, stressing the essential, expressing it in a way that will make sense for contemporary people, and remaining in touch with modern culture. There is usually a grain of truth and goodness even in false opinions”.

Here he may well have been thinking of Chesterton’s remark that every heresy boils down to the exaggeration of a particle of the truth. The Author adds, wisely I think :

“He was echoing, and no doubt knew it, the words of Pope John in his opening speech to the Council when he rounded on the ‘prophets of doom’ and insisted on a positive, non-judgmental approach to the modern world. Dialogue becomes impossible if one party starts off with a condemnation of the other”.

The Background of Rosmini

Overall, for Pope John Paul I, was the background of Rosmini, to whose memory he was devoted and on whom he had written a laborious, sound but not very distinguished doctorate thesis. The Rosminian influence was strong in his life; so, too, therefore, must have been that of Rosmini’s great work *The Five Wounds of the Church*, published in 1848. It is more than most interesting to note what, in the mind of Rosmini, those wounds were. Hebblethwaite lists them as “the separation of the people from the clergy in worship; the defective education of priests; disunity among bishops; the nomination of bishops by the secular power; and the Church’s enslavement to wealth”. *Pius ça change plus c’est la meme chose*. With the exception of the fourth wound, the Church at present is only too close to where it was, not only in the mind of Rosmini, but in fact, one hundred and thirty years ago. The wheels of God grind slowly; much slower in these matters than they should.

In the homily he preached in a crowded St. Mark’s on February 8th, 1970—the day he took possession of his See as Patriarch of Venice — John Paul quoted John XXIII, who had ordained him Bishop of Vittoria Veneto eleven years before :

"You have come to the episcopacy from teaching theology. That is an excellent thing. But it is not learning, not exquisite and abstruse language that makes a good pastor, but rather complete availability to God and to men".

The new Patriarch went on in his own words :

"Today science has developed tremendously and purified our knowledge from a thousand defects and *naivetes* of the past; our religious knowledge, likewise has to be cleansed of certain naivetes, which science contradicts and which were not, anyway, part of the authentic Christian revelation. The language and intellectual attitudes of men today have changed; and we should have the courage to change our style, offering the truth in fresh language adapted to the new attitudes. There is today a tendency to think that religious life consists merely in worship and a few moral acts. We must, rather, make room in our whole being for the truth, and let it become the centre of our thinking so that it can direct our entire life".

He concluded :

" 'You are all brothers', says the Lord. And Patriarch Roncalli (the future Pope John XXIII) liked to say : 'I am your brother Joseph'. The glory of the diocese of Venice will not be based on its magnificent churches or its splendid past, but on the efforts we make to realize fraternal union among ourselves".

John Paul I and the Poor

This sense of brotherhood blossomed, in the few years of the future Pope John Paul's patriarchate, into a very real and genuine concern for what is called the Third World. He called on the rich churches of the West to give one per cent. of their income to their poorer sisters in the developing countries. He went on to caution his people that this "should not be regarded as alms-giving but as something that was owing as part of compensation for the injustices that our consumer society is constantly inflicting on the developing world, and to make reparation for the social sins that should not be glossed over". This was fine. His love of the poor and the oppressed was never up in

the air. He took both straight to his heart in a letter written to the people of Venice in February, 1976 :

"I have urged and authorized parish priests to get rid of gold plate, pearls and rings offered by the faithful as ex-votos . . . I want to set an example myself by offering the golden chain which used to belong to Pope Pius XII and which was given to me by Pope John XXIII when he ordained me bishop. It is not much in view of the immensity of the needs. But perhaps it will help to make it understood that the real treasures of the Church are the poor, the disinherited, the weak, and that they should be helped, not by occasional almsgiving, but in such a way that they can rise to the standard of life and the level of education to which they have a right".

Here, surely, was the man the Church needed when Paul was gone. The blend was there. In retrospect, one can understand why the Cardinals chose him—and so quickly. And almost at once, after his election as Pope, he showed how right they were. His style was exactly what was wanted. His intentions were the same, as expressed in his words to the Cardinals at his Mass at 9.30 in the morning on Sunday, August 27th, immediately after his election. Hebblethwaite paraphrases their substance very well on page 116 of his book :

"Pope John Paul saw the Church not as existing for its own sake but rather 'at the service of the world'. He stressed this point twice. He pledged to put all his strength 'at the service of the world'. And he invited all Christians to pledge themselves in the same way : 'The Gospel calls all of us its children to place their full strength, indeed their life, at the service of mankind in the name of the charity of Christ'. At the same time, the service of the world does not mean conformity to it; there is the task of prophetic protest. The Church is in the world and for the world but not of the world".

Everything is there, at least by implication. The path is clear except, sadly, for those to left or right in the Church, who will try still to tie it to their own prejudices. The Church's part is defined most positively. Emphatically it does not consist in following the crowd, picking up its

leavings, like so many discarded butt-ends; but bringing men Christ most lovingly to light their way with the confident strength that can come only from the possession of God's truth :

"The danger facing modern man is that he would reduce the earth to a desert, the person to an automaton, brotherly love to planned collectivization, often introducing death where God wishes life".

And so He Died

It seemed, then, with reason, that this man who was now Pope had everything that was needed to cope with the contemporary age—except health. So few noticed this. He died alone in bed after a massive heart attack. They found him, with the light still on in his bedroom and with a copy of *The Imitation of Christ* by his side. The evening before, at 10 pm, on his way to bed, he was told of the murder that day in Rome of a left-wing youngster. Softly and sadly he said, "Even young people are killing each other now. . ." Those are his last known words. Small wonder the people loved him. They saw into his heart and knew unerringly that there was room for all of them there.

Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul's reign was short. It lasted thirty-three days. It was, nonetheless, momentous because it set the direction of the future—into the world of men, but only within a framework of truth; the Church, indeed, was to take the world to herself not instead of Christ, but because of Him. Men would come to the Church to the extent—and only to the extent—that they saw Christ in her as she herself in her priests and people gave the whole of Him to them. From this position there could be no going back, and the Cardinal Electors knew it. In this they reflected the mood of the Faithful at large. John Paul I had set the style and laid the emphasis where it had to be laid. He was splendidly on target and his successor had to be on it too. And with equally splendid boldness the Cardinal Electors—in defiance of the silly computers—chose the man to succeed him; the Cardinal from Cracow. In so doing, they were splendidly right. Few would deny—

especially in the aftermath of Puebla — that Pope John Paul II, the Pole, was exactly what the Church — to say nothing of the world — required. He showed in no uncertain fashion, immediately after his election, that his intentions were identical with those of his tragically short-lived Predecessor. Words spoken during his homily at his inaugural Mass stand in evidence of this:

“Open wide the doors for Christ. To his saving power open the boundaries of states, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization and development. Do not be afraid. Christ knows ‘what is in man’. He alone knows it”.

Restoration in Christ

His words and deeds till now, his previous stance as priest, bishop and Cardinal Archbishop of Cracow show clearly that the words cited above are the leaven in Pope John Paul II's life and that he will not rest until he has set them as leaven in the life of the People of God, who are God's Church. As I have indicated already in *Christian Order*, I feel very sure that the present Pope is the man the Church needs so much at this moment because—and precisely because—he knows how much she needs Christ. Reconciliation within the Church, which is so much needed today, will not come primarily through manoeuvre, but positively through the strength of the second John Paul's determination to take Christ to men and his call to Catholics to do the same. In Christ, as St. Paul said so long ago, there can be neither Jew nor Gentile, rich nor poor, bond nor free; but only new men united in their love of Him who is their Brother. Similarly, today, there can be neither traditionalist nor progressive; new Church nor old; left nor right, but only the unity of all in Christ Jesus Our Lord. Those who would be with the Pope in his task cannot, then, brood on the differences that separate them so sadly from others within the Church for, so to do, is to separate themselves from Christ and to make them, thereby, incapable of the major task that lies ahead. There is only one way and that is to seek, in love, the Way, the Truth and the Life that is Christ, Whom baptism makes the Brother of us

III.

The writer is a retired Catholic teacher of good and long standing; a sturdy layman from the North of England. As such, well qualified to express, as few others, the sentiments of so many Catholics in all parts of the United Kingdom at the present time. Yet, their's are the voices that are never listened to. One is entitled to ask again, as so often in the past, Why in Heaven's name, why?

Smoke of Satan

A LAYMAN'S VIEW

L. J. O'CONNOR

THE lessons of the past have ever been slow to be understood, much less acted upon. This is as true in the last quarter of the twentieth century as it has ever been. Its far-reaching effects have not left the inhabitants of this fair blue-speckled planet unscathed. Its Christian millions are disunited and the Catholic Church, once a beacon of light in a world of darkness, has by no means recovered from its self-inflicted wounds of recent years. Bishops complain and wonder why Pope John's uplifting promises are further away than ever. They exhort their bewildered flocks to give of their time and energy to discussing the panacea held out in the form of the forthcoming National Pastoral Congress.

No Accident

All this is no accident. The darkness over the earth, outlined by Pope Pius XII in his great encyclical of that name, has not lifted, but intensified, blinding us to its real cause as none other than Satan himself. Having been warned in Matthew 24/24 about false christs and false phophets, is it any wonder that Satan should have turned up where no one at all expected him—in the guise of the Holy Spirit himself? The fact that this thought is so incredible brings scorn and ridicule on anyone who dares to

give it expression. But how else can we explain the paradox of sincere priests and prelates promoting conflicting practices, whilst professing to be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God? How explain otherwise the doubts and confusions with which we ourselves are afflicted? How else account for the fall-out of priests and nuns — to say nothing of the loss of faith of the long-suffering laity, as shown in decreased attendance at Mass and the massive falling away of the products of our Catholic schools?

Satan's Master-Stroke Successful

This master-stroke of Satan has proved and is still proving supremely successful. One is forced to conclude that the disguise still holds, as divisions within the Church multiply to what must be his enormous delight. Of course, the foundations of his success were laid most assiduously ten years or more ago. In his new role as the Holy Spirit, he guided sincere priests and nuns in writing, speaking and preaching the supremacy of method over doctrine: in consequence, the very thought of the Devil went out of our Catholic schools, along with the Penny Catechism, which upheld his existence so rightly as part of the true doctrine of the Catholic Church. Lest the reader finds he still cannot accept these words, it is worth while recalling the scandal of the National Catechetical Movement at Corpus Christi College, London. Here, the majority of the teaching staff resigned *en bloc* because they found themselves in diametrical opposition to the late Cardinal Heenan on the question of religious education. Even today, seven years later, no-one doubts their sincerity; but the question that has to be asked is, Which Holy Spirit was the Cardinal following? At the same time, the new and bogus paraclete flattered the pride of a number of psychologically mature theologians into removing the word "Hell" from the lectionary and, therefore, from the minds of Catholic congregations at Mass. I think I am correct in saying that he moved the Redemptorist Fathers to drop from their missions all sermons dealing with the fires of Hell and the nature and intent of its Ruler. Surely, this was the work of a diabolical master-mind? A city divided against itself cannot stand.

Some of these sincere people, who were moved by the bogus Holy Spirit, became so certain of their position that they proclaimed it publicly against the Pope in 1968, when *Humanae Vitae* was published. Fifty-five priests and seventy-six laymen, whose names were printed in the Catholic Press in October of that year are real evidence of a much greater rebellion beneath the tip of the iceberg. And their work still goes on in the many important positions in which they now find themselves, using press, radio and television, with few, if any of their audiences aware that, in other circumstances or at other times, they would have merited the appellation of quisling or traitor; apostate, indeed, or heretic. They have woven now round themselves such a web of respectability, basking, as they do, in the climate of current toleration, that the use of such accurate terms to describe them would give universal offence. And, no doubt, they believe still that they are carrying out the wishes of the Holy Spirit himself. They have carved for themselves in the Church a niche, which now shelters those who might be termed "the Church non-practising".

Which Holy Spirit?

The question posed above as to which Holy Spirit the late Cardinal was following in his collision with the teaching staff of Corpus Christi College, was answered when he was brave enough to bring out the Penny Catechism again in 1971. This brought an immediate reaction from the then Director of Catechetics in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It took the form of a vigorous letter of protest which took up three-quarters of a column in the *Universe*. The prevailing division of opinion was illustrated further by a staff-room query in a Catholic school; "Who is teaching my children about the Devil because I am not?" The culprit, of course, was the writer, who had dared to read them stories about "Wopsy", a most popular character then with those who are now parents and grandparents. The stories were the creation of the late Father Gerard Scriven of the White Fathers.

A Gross Betrayal

That children should be deprived today in Catholic schools of their catechetical and Catholic heritage adds up to nothing short of a gross betrayal. Infiltration here plays a major part in the sinister scheme of Satan. Mary Whitehouse in her admirable new book asks, "Who Is Getting at Our Children?" Non-practising members of a supposedly Catholic staff are most certainly doing so, as are also so many others from unfaithful spouses to trendy clerics. The unstemmed flood of foetid filth, disguised as literary art and assaulting everyone from all directions is a massive betrayal spawned by international Judases. The peak (or depth) of betrayal is found in abortion, whereby children within the womb are sacrificed to the monster described by St. John in the *Apocalypse*; the seven-headed beast from the abyss, who bears the very topical names of pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. The evil master of the beast is proud to reword Christ's dictum and belittle the saving influence of Mary his mortal enemy for, having succeeded in denigrating the Rosary and shelving her message of prayer and penance in favour of his brand of ecumenism and renewal, he boasts with horrid laughter that "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign and none will be given it except the sign of Judas the traitor".

Sedition and the National Pastoral Congress

The writer attempted to point out without success how wide open to the forces of sedition was the proposed National Pastoral Congress. This was before the episcopal announcement from the pulpits that it would be held next year. The members of the parish council, confident in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, completely failed to conceive even of the possibility of alien forces existing, much less of being at work through its agency. The euphoria of repeated consultations and discussions and planning sessions swept my distasteful interruptions aside with impatience and remarks to the effect that I was "anti-Hierarchy". This indicates the effectiveness of the smoke-screen surrounding the activities within, yet harmful to, the Church. The prototype is to be found in mainland Europe, where the voice of the

"Dutch People of God" challenged the Pope himself. The coming Congress will do the same, since the contentious issues of contraception, abortion, priestly celibacy, married clergy and the remarriage of divorced persons are bound to be raised again. And where better receive the support of the media than at a National Pastoral Congress? When resolutions "democratically" passed at such a Congress meet with episcopal opposition or outright condemnation the outcry of "reactionary dictatorship" will be tremendous. Along with widespread apathy, the new "democratic structures" within the Catholic Church provide the Devil's secret weapon that could come close to destroying it since, of their very nature, these structures reverse god-given authority into man-given authority. This is completely in tune with the diabolical idea of the deification of man as synonymous with human fulfilment — *Credimus in hominem omnipotentem*—and the search for paradise on earth, so dear to those who so strongly dislike the name "atheist".

The Need to Pray

At this time, all those zealous for the Faith of their Fathers should kneel and pray fervently and without ceasing that Our Lady will bring to nothing the efforts of those whose empty endeavour to build heaven on earth could turn the Church into a secularist Tower of Babel which will try in its pride to shout down the voice of the man of God who is now, so happily, our Pope.

The Everlasting Agony

PAM CROOME

Picture the hand empaled
by nail, clawing in agony.

Take hold a hand, friendly and warm,
knowing that human hand wrought this inhuman harm.
Just such a warm hand drove the nails in
when Son of Man's death paid for man's sin.
Hear the Man groan, the Man cry,
"You yet prolong my agony
each time you wound a man or starve a child
or hurt a human heart I am again defiled.
Again my palid brow with crown of thorn
weeps bloody tears, again my robe is torn.
Every time you taunt, revile, spit in my face,
you forge anew humanity's disgrace".

Picking up a strange and disturbing excerpt from an address given by the American, Bishop Milvaine of the Diocese of Pocahontas during the (October) 1977 Synod in Rome, Philip Trower in this and a succeeding article distinguishes clearly and most necessarily between faith and experience. Acknowledgments to the Author and *The Wanderer*.

Faith, Experience, Catechesis : I

PHILIP TROWER

NOT long ago Bishop Milvaine of the Diocese of Pocahontas addressed the Synod in Rome about catechesis. Here is what he said.

"Our approach to catechesis should be evangelical. The Faith is not a collection of abstract propositions to be memorized. Faith is an encounter with Christ. It should be a deep experience. The teaching of doctrine must be complemented by a teaching based on experience. For several generations we have made a serious mistake in making catechesis mainly a matter of religious instruction, and religious instruction a watered-down theology course. We must be aware that the central goal of catechesis is to strengthen faith. To accomplish this we must build up vibrant faith communities".

At first reading one might think that there was a bishop, a bit careless perhaps, but only anxious to make the truths of religion live in the minds of his people. Who would deny that it is a blessing for children to grow up in a fervent parish, or to be taught religion, not in a dry uninspiring way, but by teachers who ardently love God and the Catholic Faith?

However, one then remembers what the faith community of Pocahontas is like. Priests and nuns in rebellion against the Pope; heresy in the catechisms; immorality passed off

as virtue in the confessional; all apparently with the Bishop's approval.

So one thinks a second time.

What lies behind this collection of statements about catechesis—why should we not call them propositions?—which the Bishop expects us to assent to, though we are to treat lightly, even contemptuously, the propositions of the Church?

Marked Opposition to The Holy Father

There are two points I would like to pick out for discussion.

The first is the idea that faith is something separate from knowledge; that you can build up faith without having first taught your people what they are to believe; indeed that you can have faith almost without knowledge, and that catechesis is not therefore primarily a matter of religious instruction.

The second point is the idea that important parts of the Catholic religion, the Revelation of God, can be learned from experience.

In dealing with these two points, I hope to throw light on a third matter; the reasons for the Bishop's noticeable dislike for clear and easily understood statements of Catholic truth, and his opposition to having these taught.

The tenor of his speech is in marked opposition to the addresses of the Holy Father, given to the faithful in general audience before the Synod, and to the Bishops afterwards. These addresses emphasized that catechesis is above all a teaching, and a teaching to be learned.

No one is in doubt that we must put what we have learned into practice. But that, strictly speaking, is a different subject — moral and spiritual formation — which follows from catechesis. First we learn, then we do. If we do without learning, we are likely to do wrong.

I begin with the Bishop's idea of faith.

In the Catholic Church the one word faith is used for three different things or realities. They are found together, but are not identical. The word applies first to the contents of Revelation, the truths and facts which God has told us and asks us to believe; secondly to the supernatural power (the theological virtue of faith) received at Baptism which

enables us not only to believe but to persist in believing; thirdly to the fervor with which we respond to what we have been told.

Nearly all Catholics, I think, know this, but I believe we do not always fully advert to it. This makes it much easier for people to pass off as faith what has nothing to do with faith in the Catholic sense, or is a serious distortion of it.

To describe as is now done every group of people with beliefs in a world beyond as a *faith community* may sound polite but is highly misleading. A group of fire-worshippers for instance: if we are honest we should say they have not faith but illusions. People who believe in God but not in the Jewish-Christian Revelation, have natural religious knowledge and a desire to serve Him, but not divine faith. (There is the possibility they might have Baptism of desire, but that is too special a subject to discuss here.) Baptized non-Catholics of good will have the supernatural virtue or power but for various reasons, mostly historical, it is prevented from having its full effect; they cannot believe all that God has revealed. Catholics who reject a part of God's teaching lose the supernatural power. They no longer have faith. Their remaining beliefs, even though true, are held from habit or personal preference.

The Protestant Conception of Faith

The essential point about the Catholic conception and meaning of the word faith is that the three realities I have mentioned — the truths revealed, the supernatural power making belief possible, and the response of the human will — can never be separated or exist apart.

Separating them, however, is just what Bishop Milvaine and many others are now plainly bent on doing. The Bishop appears to have an extreme Protestant conception of faith where the word is applied not to the content of what God has revealed, but almost exclusively to the strength or fervor with which we respond to what He has told us.

In the Catholic Church, spiritual retreats, meditation, frequent confession, the Holy Hour and the other devotions, statutes, pictures and so on existed to foster this kind of fervor. (In Pocahontas they have mostly been discouraged or have fallen into disuse.) Among Protestants the best known means was the revivalist meeting.

How much supernatural truth has in fact been revealed?

Since the 18th century there has been growing within Protestantism generally an attitude of mind which says: "The less the better". This revulsion from doctrine was set in motion, as is well known, when the Church's authority was rejected at the Reformation, but it was intensified when the attacks of the rationalist Biblical critics started to undermine faith in the trustworthiness of Holy Scripture. Men then began to turn to religious experience or inner feeling as the last inadequate foundation for religious knowledge. Reliance on feeling or experience had always played a considerable part in Protestantism, but now it began to overshadow the Bible and move into position as the ruling authority. A special religious sense was invented to explain how men detect God's presence and discover His will.

About 100 years ago a section of the Catholic higher clergy and intelligentsia — the first Modernists — began hurrying down the same path and for the same reasons. They too began to find doctrine repulsive, and it was they who first spread among Catholics the cliché about the faith not being a set of propositions. Faith was to be an experience. Once belief in a trustworthy source of revealed truth is lost, doctrine, which once filled the mind with light, comes to weigh on it like a sack of cement. The mind wants to throw it off. "Oh, no. Not another infallible definition". Such is the reaction, instead of—as it should be—"Thanks be to God. More truth. More certainty".

This once small group of runaways from Revelation and doctrine has now been swelled by hundreds of thousands, if not millions, into an unprecedented stampede.

Bultmann's Best-Selling Version

Near the end of the flight-path from doctrine the road divides.

One branch leads to and terminates in the simplest kind of Protestant revivalism. The believer is asked to make a choice for Jesus and Christian living. Implicit in this kind of revivalism are still some vital truths: Christ is God, He rose from the dead. He died for our sins. Doctrine has been reduced to a minimum and may not be always clearly formulated, but the beliefs are still Christian.

The other branch ends in what we can call Bultmann's neo- or pseudo-Christianity, which is not Christian at all. Here doctrine has vanished completely and we are left with a dilute theism or thinly disguised atheism. Even if there is a God, there is no afterlife.

Bultmann, as we know, did not invent this pseudo-Christianity. It had been coming into existence for generations. But he put on the market the best-selling contemporary version by bringing together in a coherent way the unbelief of the higher Biblical critics, the Modernist principle already mentioned that personal experience is the only certain source of religious knowledge, and the existentialist idea that people only exist as human beings by making vital decisions and committing themselves to some kind of conspicuous and public activity.

The key which unlocks this Pandora's box is the idea that all the language of Christian belief is symbolic. Nothing in it describes anything that really exists or took place (the crucifixion possibly excepted). It is a fictional and poetic expression of the people's feelings about the kind of person the ideal man should be. These feelings or "insights" constitute "revelation" and they really boil down to one. We must live for others. How and in what way is determined by circumstances. Christian living, provided it expresses concern for others in some way can embrace almost anything. So the insights of the faithful are always changing and revelation with them. Faith means, not believing truth, but acting unselfishly; and any (supposedly) unselfish act is called a "decision of faith". The "decision of faith" is really a motiveless exercise of will. (If Our Lord is a mythical figure there is no reason to follow His example.) Were we to take this parody of His religion seriously, we should have to say that faith has been confused with charity.

Nowadays, therefore, when we hear someone like Bishop Milvaine talk about faith and building up faith (or equally about "Christ's saving acts" or "proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior"), while at the same time discrediting the teaching of Catholic doctrine, we cannot be sure whether he is under the influence of Protestant revivalism or Bultmann's pseudo-Christianity. The two things use the same language but in a different sense. We can see that the Bishop is

fleeing from doctrine; but we cannot tell which path he took at the point where the road divides. We only know that he no longer speaks as a Catholic bishop should at the height of a great doctrinal revolution.

He may of course no longer have any fixed beliefs but simply be one of those people who, tossed hither and thither on the currents of heresy, now feel that if God is responsible for the Bible and the Church's teaching, He has revealed far too much. He, the bishop, can produce good "Christian" activists, who will really make the world sit up and take notice, on a much smaller ration of supernatural truth.

Much More Than an Encounter

Before finishing with the Bishop's conception of faith, I would like to consider his idea that "Faith is an encounter with Christ". He is also fond of telling us that faith means "saying Yes to a person, not to intellectual abstractions".

Is faith an encounter, a meeting with Christ? Not if we are to use words accurately. Faith is belief in Christ after we have met Him. Many people have met Our Lord, personally when He was on Earth or through His Church, and have turned away in mockery or disgust. By joining or belonging to the Catholic Church and persevering in a state grace, we do much more than meet Him. We enter into friendship with Him. The encounter with Christ is an existentialist idea which, strictly interpreted, alters the nature of the individual's relationship with Our Lord. In place of a continuing friendship, founded on the presence in the soul of sanctifying grace, there is substituted a series of disjointed meetings which take place only when a person makes "a decision of faith" that is, does a good deed. And the meeting, as we have seen, may not be with a real person. The phrase also suggests that the believer with real faith can expect some sensory feeling of Our Lord's presence, such as we have when someone is in the room with us.

Can one say that faith means "saying Yes to a Person, not to propositions or intellectual abstractions?" Again No, because it suggests that one can say Yes to a Person, in this case God (whatever such a Yes may mean — pre-

sumably, I like you, or, I love you) without saying Yes to what He tells you. Holy Scripture is full of propositions — the Ten Commandments, the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount; also of intellectual and metaphysical abstractions — things like justice, holiness, love. Many of these propositions are strictly theological. “Before Abraham was, I am”. When St. Martha said her great Yes to Our Lord near the tomb of Lazarus, “Thou art the Christ . . . It is for Thy coming the world has waited”, included in that great Yes was assent to everything Our Lord would do and say, including the founding of the Church and all He would teach and ordain through it for all time, from the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity to the use of holy water and rosary beads.

Phrases like “Faith is a meeting with Christ” or “Faith is saying Yes to a person” (while often used innocently) are even more often today escape hatches from having to teach the message of Christ which is no longer believed.

I now come to the Bishop’s idea that we should have a catechism based on experience. Is this possible? Since catechism means the teaching of Revelation and Revelation is given publicly through the Church, which crystallizes its truths in the form of doctrine, the answer is obviously No.

However, if we are to understand fully what is in the Bishop’s mind, it is necessary, I think, to start by looking at the nature and meaning of experience and its relationship to thought and knowledge.

Existentialism and the philosophies which led up to it, by exalting “experience” (often identified with emotional response) above intellectual knowledge, and setting the two things against each other as if they were enemies, have caused immense confusion as well as harm. Theologians ought not to be confused. But many other people are.

The phrase intellectual knowledge need not frighten us. It is the property of everybody, not just intellectuals. It is any knowledge not supplied directly by the senses or infused into the mind by God. Pygmies and small children have it as well as the rest of us. The only difference is that the latter have not usually arranged their ideas systematically, or pulled them out of the twilight semi-consciousness of implicit assumptions to see just what it is they are thinking.

Electricity and Experience

All natural knowledge, then, begins with experience; either through what we see, hear and touch, or through our relationships, pleasant or disagreeable, with other people. It supplies us with matter for knowledge. It can give us immense pleasure (as with music) or intense pain (the loss of loved ones). It can raise or depress our spirits. The major experience we have is living itself. It fills our minds with memories and images. Sometimes our minds react so quickly to its stimulus that it seems to have a voice. But experience by itself tells us nothing.

If we are to have knowledge we must notice it, think about it, reflect on it, or examine the ideas that arise in our minds about it to see what they are worth. Animals have all sorts of experiences. By association, it seems, they can learn how to repeat or avoid them. But they cannot, in a real sense, understand them; they cannot penetrate to the causes, first principles or essences of things—in other words to the deeper realities which lie within or beneath experience (whichever way one likes to think of it) and finally make it intelligible. Many human beings have the same experiences over and over again and because they do not reflect on them, stumble through life repeatedly making the same mistakes.

Now any kind of thought results in conclusions and conclusions inevitably form themselves in the mind as statements or propositions, even if they are as basic as "I do like this" and "I don't like that". There is no kind of knowledge capable of being passed on to others or of enlightening ourselves which does not take this shape, and a high percentage of these propositions will always be to some extent abstract.

An example will perhaps make the nature of experience and its relationship to intellectual knowledge clearer.

A man from a distant part of the world who has never heard of electricity comes across two naked electric wires in a New York hotel bedroom. He thinks it would be a good idea to join them together. As a result, he has an experience. When he has recovered consciousness and has picked himself up from the floor, he tries to explain the experience to himself. He wants to raise experience to the level of knowledge. "I touched two snakes and was bitten",

he says to himself. Or: "I had an epileptic fit". Or: "The demon of the house was displeased and bit me". Later the electrician comes to mend the wires and tells the man something about the nature of electricity and electric currents; he mentions ohms, watts, amps. If the man has any natural wisdom and humility, he says: "Thank you very much. I am grateful to you for increasing my knowledge. I now know more than I used to". But if he is like Bishop Milvaine and the now millions of semi-existentialized clergy and laity, he will say: "What you have told me does not correspond with my experience. I find it meaningless. Electricity is not a collection of meaningless propositions to be memorized". I leave it to the reader to judge which man has more sense, and which is closer to the truth about electricity.

Abstract Knowledge and Reality

Modern history provides us with an interesting illustration of a similar kind. From memoirs and newspaper reports of the Second World War, it is plain that both Roosevelt and Churchill actually enjoyed their meetings with Stalin. The personality of Stalin, or rather the qualities apparent on the surface at their meetings — the powerful will, the abilities, and perhaps a rough pleasant humor — fascinated them. The direct experience or "encounter" seems to have overpowered to a considerable degree the intellectual knowledge they had of him which was in fact closer to the reality. Face to face he seems less wicked than he was. However, if an aide had leaned forward during the negotiations and had whispered in the ear of one of them: "Remember, sir, the number of times he has betrayed his friends (or the number of people he has butchered)", I doubt if either of these astute statesmen, whatever else they might have said would have answered: "Stop bombarding me with meaningless abstract propositions. They do not correspond with my experience".

King Duncan, one feels, would have profited by some abstract knowledge of Macbeth before venturing on the experience of spending the night in his castle.

In all these examples we can see in a marked way the superiority of intellectual knowledge to raw experience.

No one, needless to say, supposes that our intellectual

knowledge about a person, object, or chain of events is the same as the person, object, or events, or exhausts all that can be said about them. Nevertheless if our thoughts are true, they give us accurate and most frequently priceless information about them which our sensory experience does not of itself reveal. When our thoughts go to the heart of a thing or being, they can tell us the most important thing about him, her, or it. "God is the Supreme Spirit, who alone exists of Himself and is infinite in all perfections". For those who can appreciate it, this proposition will have a beauty and power, giving light to the mind and joy to the soul, surpassing any natural experience: the most magnificent scenery, the finest works of art.

It is true that when we get knowledge at second hand, from books or a teacher—which is simply the accumulated thought about or examination of experience, accurate or inaccurate, by millions of other people—we often need to marry it to personal experience, especially if we are to put it to practical use. But we do not need to confirm everything we learn by the test of experience. Indeed there are many things it is better not to experience — except in imagination. Prison for instance. Eve wanted to test by experience what she considered the unmeaningful abstract information God had given her about the forbidden tree. We wish she hadn't. A confessor doesn't have to commit the seven deadly sins before he can direct a penitent in the confessional—though one is hardly surprised to hear that the idea has been suggested.

Direct Contact with the Real

The belief that experience is a way of knowing, rather than the stuff from which knowledge is derived, and also that it is a way superior to and separate from the formulation in the mind of ideas, which it can dispense with, arises partly from the complex nature of reality and the kinds of contact we can have with it.

In this world, through our senses and experience, we have direct contact with the real only partially and, as one might say, through its surface. We reach the inner nature of the real, as I have already suggested, only by thought, or by ideas from experience which can be the subject of thought—our own or other people's.

For instance, we meet a man. We have direct experience of his red hair and blue eyes. Later, we "put two and two together" in our minds and infer something about his character. We have reached indirectly a deeper and more important level of the reality the man represents. "This man is a cheat and a fraud". From abstract knowledge provided by God, we can say about him: "He has an immortal soul, he has been redeemed by Christ, he is capable of being totally transformed". We have reached a depth below which we could hardly go. We touched the surface of the reality, the color of eyes and hair, directly, by sense. We touched the deeper levels only through the mediated or indirect contact that comes through thought resulting in intellectual knowledge, or from information (in the form of propositions) provided by an Outsider.

(In Heaven this will not be so. There we shall have direct contact with the real, above all with God, which will be complete. We shall not first gaze on God, and then in order to understand what we have seen, think about Him. We shall understand by the very act of experience or contact. Experience and understanding will be identical.)

Because in this world we touch the real in two steps like this, first directly by experience through our senses and then by the indirect medium of thought and ideas and cannot touch the deepest levels by experience at all; and because by God's design we are creatures of sense and feeling as well as of intellect and will, and original sin has left the relationship of these powers in partial disorder, there will frequently be a kind of gap or apparent unrelatedness between what we experience and the thoughts we form in our minds to explain it or the information received about it from other people. These messages of experience will not only often appear to contradict the conclusions of thought, they will be more vivid; consequently seem more "real", more "true", even when the interpretations they suggest are in fact misleading. By comparison, our considered thoughts or what we know from outside sources, which are closer to the truth, have about them a certain remoteness and "unreality", as we saw in the cases of the man who had the electric shock, of Roosevelt and Churchill, and of King Duncan.

(To be concluded)

Book Reviews

SHORTS

APOLOGIES are due to the Authors and Publishers of the books mentioned below, some of whom are friends of mine. Well might they expect that their publications should not be given such seemingly cavalier treatment; that their writings should have been reviewed earlier and at greater length. I am in full agreement, but what can I do? The flow of books and pamphlets sent for review has combined with shortage of available space to make any other course but that chosen here, impossible. I am so sorry. I trust they will understand and forgive me.

The Holy Father's pilgrimage to Guadalupe in Mexico will have aroused the interest of many in the story of the miraculous appearance of Our Lady to Juan Diego, a poor Mexican peasant, in the year 1531, and of the great shrine subsequently erected in her honour and under her title of "Queen of the Americas". The story is well told and a great deal of supplementary information given in *A Handbook of Guadalupe* at the price of £2 and available from the Augustine Publishing Company, South View, Chawleigh, Chulmleigh, Devon EX18 7HL. Father Robert Nash, S.J., who has written for years with great popular skill in Ireland and done untold good to so many through his writings, gives us in *Bringing Christ Back* (Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, Indiana 46750, U.S.A.) a dramatic presentation of the Passion in contemporary terms which will prove helpful to many. *Listening with the Heart* by Father David Forrester (Burns Oates; £1.95) is a book for those who are looking for something that will bring them stillness of heart in the rush and tumble of the contemporary world. *Echoes across the Alps* by Marieli and Rita Benziger (466 East Mariposa St., Altadena, Cal., U.S.A.; \$10.00) tells the story of the extraordinary feat of Marieli and her Sister, Rita, in rescuing thousands of refugee children from the grip of hunger, disease and death in the wake of World War II. The beatification of Father Laval, the Apostle of Mauritius, will take place this summer in

Rome. The extraordinary story of his life is told by Father J. Fitzsimmons, in *Jacques Désiré Laval: the "Saint" of Mauritius* (Print Origination, Orell Mount, Hawthorne Road, Bootle L20 6NS, Bootle, U.K.). Two further books call for mention and recommendation. One is called, *The Friar of San Giovanni: Tales of Padre Pio* by John McCaffrey (Darton Longman and Todd Ltd.; £3.95). The Author knew Padre Pio well. He was, in fact, one of his close circle of, what we may call, disciples. The book speaks, in consequence, for itself. It possesses wonderful charm and a compelling veracity which makes it a joy and, at the same time, a consolation to read. I cannot recommend this book too highly. One looks differently and far more intelligently—I hope—at the contemporary world after meeting this wonderful and most holy Franciscan Friar in the pages of this most timely book. I hear it is selling well. It deserves to. It is very badly needed today.

I would recommend equally highly a first-class introduction to the study of Scripture by Mgr. John Steinmueller, a former Professor of Scripture and Consultor to the First Biblical Commission (1947-1971); in other words, a trusted expert who writes in *The Sword of the Spirit* (Stella Maris Books, P.O. Box 5307, Waco, Texas 76708, U.S.A.) a well produced introduction to scripture study with the authority and confidence that one would expect. In *The Death of Christian Culture* (Arlington House, 145 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle, New York 10801, U.S.A.; \$10.00). John Senior inquires into who and what killed Christian Culture. Readers may disagree with him, but I think they will read him. We all know who is trying to kill the Catholic Church in the Ukraine. The story is told with first-class documentation in *The Catholic Church, Dissent and Nationality in Soviet Lithuania* by V. Stanley Vardys (Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, U.S.A.). It is not pretty. It should be known.

During the past fifteen years or so, in most parts of the world, Catholics writing in opposition to contemporary Neo-Modernism have found practically no outlets for their works. The attempt has been made by old and established Catholic publishing houses to squeeze them out. In face of this, they have fallen back on their own resources and

bravely gone ahead. Thus it is that we find published by the John XXIII Fellowship Co-operative, Ltd., P. Box 22, Ormond, Victoria 3204, Australia a splendid little handbook in description and rebuttal of contemporary Neo-Modernism by Father J. Hayes. It is titled, *The Second Wave: Return to Modernism* and is well worth reading. Many will find it more than useful. From the same source comes *Existentialism and Catechetics* by Gary Scarrabellotti, M.A., Dip.Ed., which is, again, very good value and well worth reading. In this country, of course, we have the Augustine Publishing Company (address above), which is publishing excellent and most helpful material—especially that by Michael Davies — in book and pamphlet form. Three of its latest pamphlets are of very great value indeed. *Man's Origins* (30p.) by Anthony Michael Fides deals with Evolution. *Newman: a Guide to Our Time* (40p.) by Mgr. Philip Flanagan needs no commendation from me. The Author's name is quite sufficient. The same applies to *The Holy Shroud: Mirror of Christ* (50p.) by Rev. Father Charles D. Foley—an invaluable and authoritative account of the Holy Shroud of Turin.

From the United States and the Remnant Press (2539 Morrison Ave., St. Paul, Minnesota 55117, U.S.A.) comes —along with many other good and most helpful pamphlets, to say nothing of *The Remnant* (fortnightly) itself—a persuasive piece of writing that sets out the case against the ordination of women to the priesthood. Its title is, *Are Women Excluded from Holy Orders by Divine Law?* The answer is in the affirmative. It is well worth reading.

And, lastly, two slim volumes of poems, one by Father Alfred Ellis, S.J., who was for years a missionary in Guyana. His love for that country and its people shines out through the lines of some of his poetry published in *Beyond Space* (Lux Press and obtainable from the Author at Bridge House, 27 McKinley Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth BH4 8AG). Another slim volume of verse, *Grist in the Mill* by Herbert Edward Welsby and obtainable from the Author at 10, Nutfield Gardens, Northold, Middlesex, U.K., contains some very good lines that deserve to be read by many who will love them.

May I say this in conclusion? It often happens after a review of this sort or an advertisement in *Christian Order* that I am asked by readers, especially overseas, to buy these books for them. I have to say with great regret, but, at the same time, make it absolutely clear that I *cannot* do this. So much comes each day to my desk that I simply cannot continue getting books for readers. I am more sorry than I can say, but I cannot go on. Please forgive me. Please understand. Please write to the publishers or get the books mentioned above through a book-shop. After all, that is what they are for! Thank you.

Paul Crane, S.J.

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